

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (canceled).

Claim 2 (currently amended): A The method according to claim ~~1~~ 5, wherein, in a first phase of the welding process, the pairs ~~(6)~~ of clamping jaws pressed onto the first and second ~~rail~~ ~~(8,10)~~ rails are distanced from one another until adjacent surfaces ~~(9)~~ of the ~~two~~ first and second rails ~~(8,10)~~ are spaced from one another to form a welding gap W_s , and, in a second phase, the pairs ~~(6)~~ of clamping jaws are moved towards one another while current is supplied and, parallel thereto, the compressive force is passed into the second rail ~~(10)~~ by the rail-pushing device ~~(19)~~.

Claim 3 (currently amended): A The method according to claim ~~1~~ 5, wherein the compressive stress produced by the compressive force of the rail-pushing device ~~(19)~~ conforms to at least an ideal compressive stress correlating to ~~the~~ actual rail temperature.

Claim 4 (currently amended): ~~A~~ The method according to claim ~~1~~ 5, wherein the welding unit ~~(11)~~ and the rail-pushing device ~~(19)~~ are controlled synchronously.

Claim 5 (new): A method for welding two rails of a track using a welding unit of a welding machine comprising the steps of:

(a) actuating compression cylinders of the welding unit to move first and second rails with respect to a working direction of the welding machine in a longitudinal direction of the rails, each of the first and second rails being gripped by a pair of clamping jaws of the welding unit;

(b) producing in a third rail adjoining the second rail a rail anchor in front of the welding machine in the working direction via a force-locking connection of a section of the third rail to ties; and

(c) conducting a welding process to weld the first and second rails to one another;

wherein parallel to the welding of the first rail to the second rail, a compressive force for producing a compressive stress is passed into a front rail end of the second rail via a rail-pushing device in a direction towards the first rail, the rail-pushing device being supported on the rail anchor of the third rail; and

wherein after termination of the welding process, the first rail is braced with ties.